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Friday, 28th November
12.30pm to 6.30pm
Saturday, 29th November
11.00am to 5.00pm

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Books may be purchased at the fair and trade orders taken.

ALMOST any art, scientific and literary periodicals, including magazines, newspapers, journals, books, etc., are available at the fair. The fair is held at the Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London NW1, on Friday, 28th November, 12.30pm to 6.30pm, and on Saturday, 29th November, 11.00am to 5.00pm. The fair is open to all, and no charge is made for admission. The fair is held in aid of the Socialist Book Fair, which is a non-profit making organisation. The fair is held in aid of the Socialist Book Fair, which is a non-profit making organisation. The fair is held in aid of the Socialist Book Fair, which is a non-profit making organisation.

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Salary Scale £5,280 - £7,920

The CWS Library & Information Unit in Manchester, provides a comprehensive business information service throughout the organization. Shortly, our Librarian will be taking maternity leave and, therefore, although we are seeking someone to control the library function for a temporary period of six months, the appointment may become permanent.
Reporting to the Manager, Library and Information Unit, you would control and maintain the library and information service, including the collection, classification and cataloguing of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc. You should also be responsible for the control of the library's financial resources and for the control of the library's physical resources. You should also be responsible for the control of the library's physical resources. You should also be responsible for the control of the library's physical resources.



Judith Connolly, Central Personnel, CWS Limited, PO Box 52, New Century House, Manchester M60 4ES. Telephone: 061-824 1212, ext 378.

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Appointment of

KEEPER OF MANUSCRIPTS AND RECORDS

The present holder of this post retires at the end of April, 1981. Applications are invited from persons who possess a good honours degree with experience of the custody of manuscripts and records and a thorough knowledge of Welsh and English. The person appointed will be expected to enter upon her/his duties on 1 May, 1981.
The salary scale will be £3,973 a three annual increments - £18,840 per annum. A satisfactory superannuation scheme is available. Further details may be obtained from the Secretary of the Library at the above address and applications must reach the Librarian not later than 31 December, 1980.

LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

STOCK BOROUGH

RS.013 to RS.048 (inclusive)

(full award pending)

An experienced and qualified Librarian is required to work in the Stock Borough Library. The Librarian will be responsible for the collection, classification and cataloguing of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc. The Librarian will also be responsible for the control of the library's financial resources and for the control of the library's physical resources. The Librarian will also be responsible for the control of the library's physical resources.

For full details and an application form, please apply to the Librarian, Stock Borough Library, 100, The Quadrant, Stock, London SE16 5JL. Please quote reference LBS/80/100. Closing date: December 31, 1980.

Telephone: 01-701 2870 any time for an application form, or write to the Librarian, Stock Borough Library, 100, The Quadrant, Stock, London SE16 5JL. Please quote reference LBS/80/100. Closing date: December 31, 1980.

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W. J. F. JENNER	Viewpoint
DENNIS DUNCANSON	B. Michael Frolic : Mao's People
CHRISTOPHER BROWN	Commentary A mixed exhibition (Waterloo : British Figure Drawings : Dutch Landscape Prints of the 17th Century) at the British Museum
FRANCES SPALDING	Edward Munch (Riverside Studios)
PAUL DRIVER	Michael Tippett : King Priam (Royal Festival Hall)
DOUGLAS JOHNSON	Napoleon (London Film Festival)
VICTORIA GLENDINNING	William Trevor's adaptation of Elizabeth Bowen's The Happy Autumn Fields (BBC TV)
JACQUELINE S. HEATON	Snoo Wilson : Space Ache (Tricycle Theatre)
PIER PAULI PASOLINI	From 'Southern Dawn' (poem)
	To the Editor Among this week's contributors
VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM	Ray Gosling : Personal Copy—A Memoir of the Sixties
DEREK MAHON	The Hunt by Night (poem)
NORMAN NICHOLSON	Glacier (poem)
PAUL DELANY	William M. Chace : Lionel Trilling Louis Hyde : Rat and the Devil
WILLIAM S. MCCRELY	Charles H. Nichols (Editor) : Arna Montemps-Langston Hughes Letters, 1925-1967
GEOFFREY GRIGSON	Then, Le Grand Bey (poem)
WILFRID MELLERS	Michael Tippett : Music of the Angels John Cage : Empty Words
PETER YOUNG	Henry Raynor : Music in England
MICHAEL TREND	Michael and Mollie Hardwick : Alfred Deller—A Singularity of Voice
JOSEPH WYKWERE	Dore Ashton : A Fable of Modern Art Xavier Rubert de Ventós : Heresies of Modern Art
CHRISTOPHER LLOYD	Peter Murray : The Dulwich Picture Gallery
JOHN CRONIN	A. A. Kelly : Mary Lavin—Quiet Rebel
EDMOND O'BRIEN	Helen Heineman : Mrs Trollope Johanna Johnston : The Life, Manners and Travels of Fanny Trollope
ROSEMARY ASHTON	John Cannon : The Road to Haworth
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VICKI FLEAVER	Ellen Newton : This Bad My Centre
GAV CLIFORD	Charlotte Wolff : Highlights
	Fiction
JULIA BRIGGS	Brief Encounters

Journal des Pöcations covered the period 1939-1945. The note on the back cover gently understates the cause of the most serious of the *ungraisers* described at the end of the book by referring to Jouhaux's "harmless" and "unpolitical" discernment. His intense preoccupation with an inner life, of a quite genuinely religious though admittedly orthodox Catholic nature, his devotion to his wife and to a schoolmaster and to his pupils, and the harassments of being married to an ex-cabaret dancer (turned Knutshippie, left him little time to attend to his duties) which he regarded as saintly political facts in the burnings of the books in Germany, the activities of the notorious police chief Chiappe or the existence of the *Concours de la Beauté*—all these items of the kind that were disturbing the majority of French writers during the 1930s. There is no factual justification for saying that Jouhaux was well paid for his book, but he may have earned on account of such deludingly ideal

JUDITH R. WALKOWITZ

This book examines the state regulation of prostitution in mid-Victorian England, as established by the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869. It explores the origins of the Acts, the successful feminist campaign to repeal them, their impact on the registered prostitutes and their community, and the wider social and political issues involved.

£15.00 net

The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU

Webs of narrative

By Louis Allen

MILDRED M. TAHARA (Editor):
Tales of Yamato
A Tenth-Century Poem-Tale
318pp. Honolulu: University Press
of Hawaii, \$15.
0 8248 0617 4

MARIAN URY (Editor):
Tales of Times Now Past
Sixty-two Stories from a Medieval
Japanese Collection
199pp. University of California
Press, £6.
0 520 03864 9

The Japanese have always had a vast appetite for fiction. *The Tale of Genji*, one of the earliest and finest novels in any language, is only one of a number of fictions which sprang from the refined court world of Heian Japan, with its capital in Kyoto, its reverence for poems, its clandestine love affairs and its remoteness from the life of the people in the rice fields. The ability to turn a verse was terribly important and much of the prose fiction is studied with poems, or even—like the *Yamato Monogatari*, completed half a century before *Genji* in 952—began as a kind of web-narrative to hold together explanations of the origins of poems. Hence the name *uta monogatari*, or "poem-tale", which is used to describe the genre.

Translating work of this kind is a formidable task, since it involves not merely a shift of time and space but also an endless need to supply the thread of allusion, doubly important with Japanese, which thrives on ambiguity. Mildred Tahara has made a creditable stab at it, though the work does bear the stamp of a promoted doctoral thesis, by the apparatus if not in the text. Besides the translation itself, there is an account of early Heian literature (usefully done), close on ninety pages of notes, finding-lists of poems, a bibliography and an index.

The work is meant for scholars, yet I think that scholars and the occasional common reader might have preferred footnotes to end-notes, since so much elucidation is necessary as you read through the text, wondering perhaps what the various titles mean—"Director of the Right Division of the Bureau of Horses", "Minister of the Left" and so on; and you need to be shown the point of the endless puns on which classical Japanese poetry bases its technical virtuosity.

In a few cases the poem slips into the background and the narrative becomes autonomous, as in the story of the Minor Captain who takes shelter from the rain and glimpses a woman, hair trailing to the ground through her raitan blinds. He answers her song with his own poem and spends the night with her. In the morning she collects a dish of greens from him and offers with them a poem inscribed on the petals of plum blossom, the "most unusual and tasteful dish" of his life. Years later, retired from the Imperial Service, he becomes a Buddhist monk and sends her his robe to wash: I sleep all alone In an ancient house Into which I, wet and snow Have made their way; Here, I offer you My black robe of hemp.

The apparent inconsequence—or rather ellipsis—of the ending is further complicated by the fact that the final poem is built up on word-play: "my black robe of hemp" (*ura no kuro no henu*), until the ideogram wrenches it into a single meaning, can equally be read as "It is morning" ("I offer you" being the translator's amplification of the single verb *nari*—"is"). So the poem can also be read:

In an old house In frost and snow It is morning as I lie prone And sleep alone.

By and large, Tahara's translation reads well, though there are occasional lapses into incongruous modernness, as when a prince regrets he cannot call upon his lover "because of a directional taboo" (*kyō*

no futagareba), which might be appropriate in the mouth of an amorous anthropologist but seems a little out of place here. Something else seems to have gone astray here, too. In the lover's reply, occur the lines "Hitoyo Meguri no/Kimi to nureroba", which are translated as "You seem to be transformed into the deity Hitoyo Meguri". This doesn't tell the reader very much, and ignores a play on words. *Hitoyo* can be read "one night", *meguri* is "going the rounds", so the verse could read something like "Fate blocks the way/To our meeting/And so my lord/Wanders through the night". It is this meaning which makes the prince ignore the taboo and spend the night with her after all. But no translator can possibly fix all the meanings in print, unless he wants his version to look like an endless series of parallel texts.

Marian Ury's selection from the *Konjaku Monogatari* is a quite different proposition. The *Konjaku* is perhaps, with *Uji Shūi Monogatari*, the best-known example of what the Japanese call *setsuwa* *hinagaku*, literature of anecdote or legends, or simply "tales". There is little poetic element, no shining court ladies, but a series of narratives which remind us of the *fables*, because the wit is in the way the narrative itself develops rather than in some subtly allusive word play. *Uji Shūi* exists already in English, thanks to a superb translation by Douglas Mills, who encouraged Marian Ury to have a go at the *Konjaku*, though versions of a number of tales exist in English and French. Professor Ury's sixty-two tales are taken from every one of the chapters, so that

Struggling with snobbery

By Paul Taylor

THURANCE DE VERE WHITE:
Birds of Prey
157pp. Gollancz, £5.95.
0 575 02911 0

The stories in this collection are nasty, brutish and short—yes, indeed, is the life they convey. Most of them pivot on the theme of snobbery, distantly recalling the Angus Wilson of *A Bit Off the Map*, though this comparison is not work in their advantage. What is pleasing and original in Wilson's venomous vignettes comes across, in De Vere White, as pinched and crabbed.

In the title story, Cyril and Emma Wolfe condescendingly establish themselves in a terrace which they feel, having once lived in Mecklenburgh Square, several degrees too smart for. A power struggle ensues for the control of the lane that runs from their house to the major opposite. They aren't very close to each other as a couple, but have a wily tactical partnership that comes from their paranoid attempt to keep up with a genteel but not a genteel comfort each other. Their egos had always been strong; but they avoided conflict by establishing a mutual selfishness. In a situation such as the present each suffered for himself and the other.

But snobbery, in these stories, has the tendency to backfire on its unfortunate practitioners. Cyril and Emma are eventually isolated by their absurd calculations. In like vein, "Portrait of a Lady" sourly shows how the divided Miss Mulligan, ashamed of being a Liverpool Catholic, too embarrassed to tell how she has sacrificed her early inclination to looking after a mentally handicapped sister, unwittingly destroys her chances of a job with the Home-workers' Association by charmingly harping on her connections with colonial and Conservative Clubs. At the end, all jobless, she merely feels she should have used this play more insistently.

De Vere White falls between two stools. The writer on snobbery can either take an exultant delight in the baroque extravagance of his material or thoughtfully explore snobbery's destructive workings. These stories lack both the sheer operatic vivacity of E. F. Benson's wonderfully wasteful Lucia stories and the sensitivity to another's social sensitiveness of, say, Dickens in *Great Expectations*. De Vere White seems glumly trapped in the spite he is attempting to outface.

she gives us a good idea of the cross-section of interests. The sources of the tales are very different from those of the *Yamato Monogatari*: *Konjaku* deals with stories of Buddhism, of Indian and Chinese origin, and in Chapters 21 to 30 with what Professor Ury describes as "secular" tales of Japan. The stories are arranged thematically, in pairs, a recognition technique which is echoed in the familiar clichés that start them off: "Ina wa mukashi", which automatically summons up "once upon a time" or "long, long ago"—a summons deftly eschewed by the translator who insists on "at a time now past", partly because where protagonists are named the reference is to real people not fictive creations. The result is meant to be, as she says, both "typical and astounding". So the narrative contains dramatic "stills" like the moments of intensity in a kabuki play and with a moral, though the moral doesn't always encompass the entire range of the anecdote.

One of the secular tales—illustrated by a woodblock print—is interesting as an example of how the supernatural invades the secular and of how the world of animals mingles with the world of men. Seven fishermen are blown by a storm on to an island where the lord, who controls the winds, feeds them and enlists their help against an enemy, not of human shape, from another island. They prepare to fight, and at the hour of the Snake two balls of fire emerge from the forest, making the mountains tremble. They are the eyes of a ten-yard long centipede, glowing scarlet and green. An equally long

and fearsome snake appears and the two give battle. Things go badly for the snake until the fishermen's arrows and swords overcome the centipede, whereupon the wounded snake retreats to the mountain from which the lord of the island emerges later, limping and wounded but joyful at the victory. He invites the seven to fetch their families and make their home on the island, which they do. No one is allowed to land there, though its inhabitants cross the sea once a year to Kaga Province and worship at the Kumada Shrine.

As a plausibility, the tale ends with the affirmation that the men's karma from previous lives had ensured their prosperity on the island; but the lord of the island, by his reference to the Kumada Shrine, shows that he is a Shinto deity. The tale might well have been coined as a piece of publicity for the Shrine. To call this a "secular" tale is straining the word, and Professor Ury admits it could fit equally well into the chapter which deals with supernatural creatures; but we should not be too fussy about these demarcations, particularly since no preface has survived to tell us the compiler's purpose. Most of the tales concern discovery in the psychological sense, the revelation of a reality beneath appearances, as when a government official hears a piece of music and can't help dancing to it, showing that he was once only a strolling player. So the work is interesting both as a stage in the growth of Japanese fiction, and as evidence, useful to anthropologists and students of comparative religion.

done with both the pathos and the absurdity of this situation. De Vere White tricks it out with unnecessary twists and turns. We only realize at the end that the man is telling the story to yet another victim on a train. From your luggage that you live in a house, it is a place I've always meant to visit." For an opening of horrifying vistas, this "clever" ending emasculates the impact of what has gone before: the payoff in these stories hardly ever pays off.

The portrayal of relations between the sexes is doubly skewed. The women are manipulative and wheedling, the men obstinate and oppressed; and there is no Thelma-like humanity in Lenin the cliché. In a rather good story, "Lily Coo", the husband returns from a conference with another fond that his wife has poured herself a drink. This unspeakable outrage has "the effect of a blow. It was almost as if he had found he was with another man". This is not a bit even for Ireland and 1945.

Faster than light

By John Clute

GREGORY BENFORD:
Timescape
412pp. Gollancz, £7.95.
0 575 02793 2

Few science fiction novels are about science. Most make superstitious use of scientific lingo for the purposes of plot and venue, but the tone is generally incantatory, and working scientists rarely appear. The gap between the two cultures remains.

Gregory Benford's *Timescape*, which is by far the best novel yet from this working physicist and successful writer, is an exception. Its protagonists are physicists deeply and obsessively involved in the esoteric pursuit of (relatively) pure knowledge: its plot involves them in what might be called imaginary science in a real garden. The world of 1998 is close to terminal ecocatastrophe. An unholy brew of long-molecule pesticides, having entered the world's food chain, is poisoning the world's crops, with the viruses capable to transmute into versions of itself higher and higher elements in the food chain. Its growth is exponential: it is about to enter

the atmosphere and end life as we know it.

Of the resources available to the world's failing government, only the more remote seems to be a project—lovingly described—to induce morse-coded tachyon transmission through time and space to the earth of 1963, warning of the disaster to come (tachyons are hypothetical faster-than-light particles perfectly respectable to the physics of 1968, though imaginary) and movement faster than light entails movement backwards through time. Most of the novel, set in an expanded dawn-like America circa 1962-63, before the Kennedy assassination, deals with the efforts of a rising young physicist at the University of California (La Jolla branch) to make sense of an experiment involving indium antimonide, a substance whose atomic structure, sensitive to tachyon bombardment, is registering interference effects in inverse code.

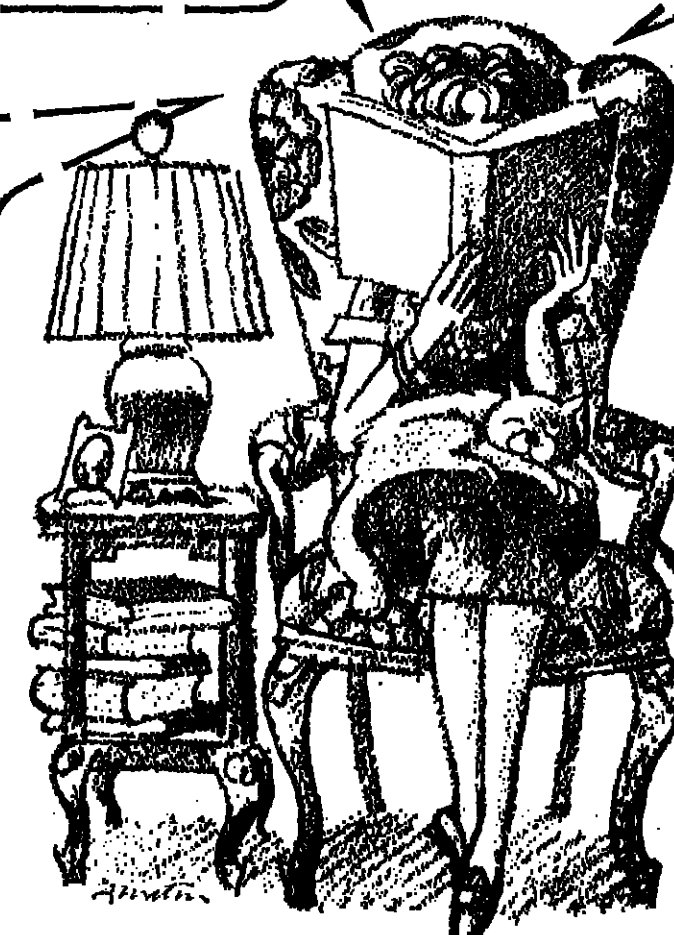
Gordon Barnette, the physicist in question, is a well-realized character: his ultimately triumphant obsession with his problem, with a York Jewish enthusiasm deep, into surfing, sex and Coldwater, his befuddled immersion in antebellum politics and rivalries, all being the reader of an elevated sense that the baseness of scientific capitalism is being laid bare for him, and that to be a working physicist is to be in the world, where we all are.

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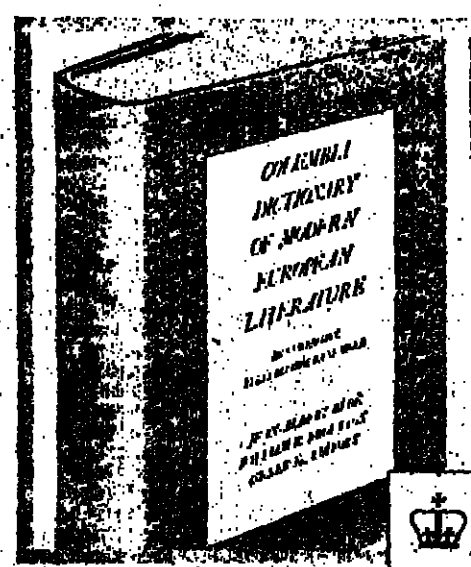
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A trader from the badlands

By John Hemming

BRUCE CHATWIN:
The Viceroy of Ouidah
155pp. Cape. £5.95
0 224 018205

In his preface to *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, Bruce Chatwin explains that his original intention had been to write a study of the slave trade between West Africa and Brazil. He was fascinated by Francisco Félix de Sousa, a Brazilian slave-trader who became a blood brother of King Gezo of Dahomey in the early nineteenth century. The Dahomeans were particularly bellicose—"a black Sparta squeezed between the Yoruba tribes of present-day Nigeria and the Ewe tribes of Togo"—and their warriors and their regime of Amazonian captured slaves and victims to fill Sousa's slave ships. Sousa flourished and, to the fury of British abolitionists, became the richest man in West Africa. But changing attitudes to slavery among Europeans and eventually among Brazilians, as well as the tortuous intrigues of Dahomean politics, combined to ruin Sousa. All that now remains of his empire are rotting houses and dozens of black offspring in the crumbling town of Ouidah in the People's Republic of Benin. Across the Atlantic, in the impoverished north-east of Brazil, there are similar relics and descendants of the wicked adventurer.

Two things made Chatwin change his plan. One was an unfortunate misunderstanding when he drove innocently towards Cotonou airport in a taxi, he became entangled in an abortive coup: rebels escaped, Chatwin alone was arrested, and

spent some days that "I would prefer to forget" in a Benin jail. He gained first-hand experience of today's equivalent of King Gezo's Amazonians when a lady corporal stopped him on his way to the research into the life of Francisco de Sousa was cut short. The other deterrent was a reading of Pierre Verger's monumental study of the Brazil-Brazil slave trade. Chatwin decided that he could add little to Verger's scholarship, and so instead he wrote a work of fiction.

In *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, the real Francisco de Sousa becomes Francisco da Silva but most of his strange story remains unaltered. We read about his tough upbringing in the parched sertão, the badlands of the interior of Bahia and Pernambuco. Orphaned in a devastating drought, Silva became a lonely cattle drover. This experience made him resourceful, cunning and utterly pitiless. He acquired a leathery toughness and stamina which enabled him to survive terrible ordeals in Dahomey; once he was totally submerged in a vat of indigo, with only a straw to breathe through, so that he would turn acceptably black; on another occasion, he was left without water or shade or food, to die. When a sudden change of fortune restored his wealth, Silva had seen enough of the gory Dahomean capital, where a palace pathway was paved with human skulls, to have no pity or remorse about the human cargoes he picked off in Brazil. At the height of his power, he invested in a fleet of Baltimore clipper fast enough to outstrip British naval cruisers. But these fast ships sailed at a sharp angle of keel, so that the hatches had to remain lashed and there was a high death-rate among the cargo of slaves.

All this makes a strange setting for the second book of an author

whose *In Patagonia* enjoyed much critical praise. The story evidently appealed to Chatwin not because of any prurient interest in the scandalous aspects of his subject, but because it took place in backwaters of Africa and South America. There is almost nothing in this book about the mechanics or dimensions of the slave trade. But there are brilliant descriptions of the dusty, poverty-stricken interior and of the decay of the humid coast. Almost every page contains marvellous, almost obsessive observations by some one who has travelled in these remote places and who revels in the outlandish or the exotic. The strength of the book lies in the depiction of everything from the back of a man burnt alive in a brush-fire to a tree full of a library of sleeping fruit bats, and from the pictures and tattered furnishings of a Benin house.

Chatwin reserves his most careful descriptions for anything connected with religion or superstition. He compares the power of a blood-thirsty Dahomean king, surrounded by prostrate subjects and the skulls of his victims, with that of a *poderoso* da sertão, a mighty baron of the Brazilian northeast. He notices every custom or ritual that surrounds marriage, childbirth, or particularly death in these two remote worlds. He loves to catalogue the curious and relics kept by old people — by Francisco da Silva after his eventual decline, or by his daughter.

The Viceroy of Ouidah is remarkably short for a novel that covers the rise and fall of trading dynasties and spans a century and a half in time. But it is none the less powerful despite its brevity. It tells of amazing adventures in wild places and makes compelling reading.

Haitian divorce

By David Geggus

PIERRE PLUCHON:
Toussaint l'Ouverture: de l'esclavage au pouvoir
399pp. Paris: Editions de l'Ecole.
£5.99

WENDA PARKINSON:
"This Gilded African": Toussaint l'Ouverture
212pp. Quartet. £5.99.

The rise and fall of Toussaint l'Ouverture is one of the great personal epics of world history. The son of an African chief, born a slave, he emerged from the obscurity of a West Indian plantation to become a figure of international renown. A small, ugly, barely literate black man, within a decade he established himself as one of the most brilliant soldiers and statesmen of his day. Betrayed and imprisoned by Napoleon, he died with dignity in a squalid Alpine dungeon.

Personal drama apart, Toussaint's career is one of abiding historical interest. France's monster colony of Saint Domingue, where he lived, was one of the most materially successful of all slave societies. A keystone of the Atlantic economy, it was probably the richest colony in the world, when it collapsed like a house of cards during the French Revolution. The ensuing power struggle between its white and free coloured communities and half a million black slaves, richly complicated by French political and foreign intervention, offers a fascinating study of the intersection of class and colour conflict and of revolutionary social change. Though shaken by the largest slave revolt of all time, the plantation regime in Saint Domingue crumbled surprisingly slowly. Some 70,000 European soldiers died trying to maintain it, but after twelve years of bloodshed the ex-slaves proclaimed the Republic of Haiti, the first ever (apart from the United States) post-colonial society and the first modern black state.

It was against this backdrop of slavery war and revolution that the former coachman of the British royal household rose to prominence. Having joined the rebel slaves who had devastated Saint Domingue's fertile northern plain, he fought for the invading Spanish royalists and then the French Republic, once it had declared slavery abolished. Moulding field-bands and flunkies into an effective guerrilla army, he expelled Spanish and British invaders and slowly manoeuvred himself into a position of supreme power, only to find a formal recognition of independence, which was achieved, amidst incredible carnage, only months after his death.

The subject has attracted much superficial writing but little basic research. At last, however, we have in Pierre Pluchon's biography a work solidly grounded on the massive collections of the Archives Nationales. A work of *haute volée* rather than an academic monograph, it brings to light much new material and quotes liberally from its sources. By staying close

to the documents, it avoids many of the errors that beset the printed literature and which have been compounded by successive writers. It is essentially a political biography. The author pays little attention either to the military events that built large in most biographies of Toussaint, or to the social background. The physical environment is not mentioned, and of that strange twilight world in which Saint Domingue slowly became Haiti we learn little. Pluchon is careful, however, to set the military situation, however, notes, produced a political revolution in the blacks' favour, it was the Republic's policy of sequestrating absentees' property that carried through a social revolution, of which Toussaint became the guarantor. The influence of French Revolution historiography is evident, and the writer's knowledge of Paris politics is put to good use.

Pluchon's stress on the early appearance of a black landholding class is novel. It leads him to downplay the pro-white aspects of Toussaint's policies, for which black contemporaries (his and ours) have tended to reproach him. Very few whites, he claims, were given back their estates. Toussaint's government was "raciste". "If nationalisation of the plantations", it is the heart of Toussaint's personal rule, 1799-1801, that Pluchon concentrates, not on the campaigns of the 1790s and the War of Independence, depicting "une féodalité insaisissable" of local military chiefs, he contrasts Toussaint's political skill with his failure to achieve the economic development, and some interesting details on Toussaint's white government personnel. Pluchon's study is a valuable contribution to the history of the black revolution. It reveals that he himself was a slaveholder, working a small property with a dozen slaves. This was something that the insurmountable slave leader had succeeded in covering up until now.

De l'esclavage au pouvoir is a robust, somewhat spare work. It lacks the fire of *The Black Jacobins* and does not supplant the classic biographies of Schoelcher and Paulus-Sannon, but it is undoubtedly a major study. We now await an exploration of the sources in Spanish and the publication of the definitive *L'Ouverture* correspondence.

Wenda Parkinson's book is a popular biography. Its blurb claims it as "thoroughly researched" but it is based on the same dozen or so works as many similar biographies. References to documents "from the archives of Haiti" will not bear examination and the listing of archives in the bibliography is quite gratuitous. Although the author's imaginative recreations of some aspects of Toussaint's life are not without merit, the text is painfully inaccurate, and not just for the specialist. Added to misstatements, misquotations, and a number of misspellings of proper names that passes belief, it becomes an irritating book to read. It should, however, introduce many new readers to a fascinating subject.

plot against Governor Laveaux. Toussaint sought not to save but to overthrow him. Commissioner Sonthonax was sacrificed. Agoué Hédoval, similarly driven out, had not really been instructed to sow discord in the colony. In this institute in Haiti, one senses a certain sympathy for these powerless metropolitan officials, isolated and baffled in a land slipping inexorably away from European influence.

Given a greater familiarity with the military situation, however, some of these judgments might have been revised. This is especially true of the earlier part of the book, where Pluchon is least satisfactory. Had he used Spanish sources, he might have been more reluctant to present Toussaint merely as a opportunist who took no part in organising the great slave revolt and who abandoned the Spaniards for the French out of self-interest. Strangely, Toussaint's famous proclamations of August 1793 receive no mention. The well-known Laveaux correspondence is also entirely ignored. This has the further consequence that the curious relationship between the ex-slave and the French aristocrat is given scant treatment, though what unsentimental Pluchon does say is refreshingly unambiguous. None the less, these letters are central to a consideration of Toussaint's complex personality, an area the author illuminates little. Toussaint remains, even, an enigma: vain but with astonishing self-control, boastful speaking and devious, ruthlessly ambitious yet devout, humane, even proud.

Pluchon, however, does cast one penetrating ray of light back into the obscurity of Toussaint's past, hitherto a subject only of fable. Recently discovered legal records show him to have been freed fifteen years before the Revolution and reveal that he himself was a slaveholder, working a small property with a dozen slaves. This was something that the insurmountable slave leader had succeeded in covering up until now.

De l'esclavage au pouvoir is a robust, somewhat spare work. It lacks the fire of *The Black Jacobins* and does not supplant the classic biographies of Schoelcher and Paulus-Sannon, but it is undoubtedly a major study. We now await an exploration of the sources in Spanish and the publication of the definitive *L'Ouverture* correspondence.

Wenda Parkinson's book is a popular biography. Its blurb claims it as "thoroughly researched" but it is based on the same dozen or so works as many similar biographies. References to documents "from the archives of Haiti" will not bear examination and the listing of archives in the bibliography is quite gratuitous. Although the author's imaginative recreations of some aspects of Toussaint's life are not without merit, the text is painfully inaccurate, and not just for the specialist. Added to misstatements, misquotations, and a number of misspellings of proper names that passes belief, it becomes an irritating book to read. It should, however, introduce many new readers to a fascinating subject.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, BIOGRAPHER

Robert Folkenflik

This is the first book-length work in English to be devoted to the achievements of Samuel Johnson as a biographer. Professor Folkenflik maintains that the biographies have been frequently misinterpreted and that critics have failed to recognize the sophistication of Johnson's approach to the writing of a literary life. Looking at the biographical works as a whole, he compares the early ones with the later *Lives of the Poets*. He considers Johnson's biographical practice in the context of his conception of man, discusses his principles of biography, and treats in detail one of his greatest works, the *Life of Savage*.

"There should be room for this book on the shelf of any Johnsonian, of anyone interested in biography as an art form, of any student of eighteenth-century English literature. It has many praiseworthy qualities."—*Bertrand H. Bronson, Eighteenth-Century Studies*.

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From the Punjab to Gravesend

By Michael Banton

ARTHUR WESLEY HELWEG:
Sikhs in England
The Development of a Migrant Community
173pp. Oxford University Press. £5.75
0 19 561156 0

Many recent studies of the position of ethnic minorities in Britain have seen the structure of the receiving society as the main influence upon majority-minority relations. They have written about the development of a system of contract labour, embedded in immigration laws, as the state's response to the employers' desires. They have pictured British society as generating an exceedingly ill-defined force, called "racism", which limits the opportunities open to racial minority members and impels them to fight back in particular ways.

There are, of course, other avenues of approach. One of them, admirably illustrated by the book under review, is to start from the sending society: to see the immigrant as people with their own culture, as people utilizing the opportunities for higher earnings in order to pursue the same goals as those pursued by those of their fellows who do not emigrate. This perspective is essential to any understanding of Chinese and South Asian minorities in many parts of the world, Britain included, but it can also illuminate the experience of emigrants from the West Indies.

The British have not been sensitive to these issues because their own emigration has been carried by the waves of European economic success. They have been migrant rulers as much as migrant workers and when, as in Asia and Africa, they have built up little ethnic colonies, this has been more for reassurance than to provide services essential to group survival. Doubtless there are people who have returned to Britain from the West Indies because they dislike the prospect of their children growing up to be Americans; they at least have the option of returning to the land of their fathers.

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tively few British people are conscious of how pain are the psychological costs entailed in changing countries.

The goals which emigrants from the Asian community pursue differ from those of British emigrants, being knitted into kinship and neighbourhood patterns. Sikhs, as Arthur Wesley Helweg shows, can respond to financial incentives as enthusiastically as any Latin American worker, but their first concern is for family honour. Savings from work in an English factory can be used to buy land in the Punjab, to help female kinswomen make "good" marriages, and to perform services for others. These may include the family's honour, but the misbehaviour of one of its members can reduce the standing of everyone else.

In the early years of the Sikh settlement in Gravesend (where much of this research was conducted) the men were on the land and might work as many as 40 hours a week. They cut their hair, frequented the pubs, and lived as if they were about their misconduct. This phase came to an end about 1959, accelerated by the emigrants' fear that the British would bring in restrictive legislation. Instead of sponsoring the immigration of only male kin they then began to bring over their wives and female kin. The women established a but line about the doings of their fellow Sikhs, especially of those they disapproved. Consider the case of Kewal Singh, a young man who, as a dutiful son, remitted money to his parents in the Punjab. His father started to arrange a marriage for him. But the bride's family heard that he was often drunk and slept with English girls, so they would not agree to a marriage. Kewal's parents were saddened and their standing in the village was demeaned.

This was the beginning of something new, with little parallel in the history of British emigration. From this point onwards migrant behaviour has to be seen not just in relation to the sending and receiving societies, but in relation to the third factor, the family. The transfer of money, calls the author, is a family affair, and the daughters' hair, had to be

bound and the children brought up in accordance with Punjab propriety. These older girls who believed in ways that might irritate the English were put in their place, for they could lead only to immorality.

The transient community was present in the Punjab. When successful migrants visited the Punjab they were received with deference, but their first concern was for family honour. Savings from work in an English factory can be used to buy land in the Punjab, to help female kinswomen make "good" marriages, and to perform services for others. These may include the family's honour, but the misbehaviour of one of its members can reduce the standing of everyone else.

In the present phase the new generation is caught between the transient community and the receiving society but is also able to live off against the other. Perhaps this is a difficult and dangerous observation to make—the racial prejudice of the English will have a positive aspect, for it will make the generation gap within the Sikh community smaller than in the United States. There the second generation felt guilty about the pain they caused them. In Britain most of the second- and third-generation Sikhs will want to be identified as Sikhs, and the transient community will be like the hyphenated minorities across the Atlantic (Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, etc.) but the nature of that group will largely depend upon the scope that British society allows the new colonists.

Jungles, edited by Edward S. Ayer, published by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, and written and researched by a team of ornithologists and zoologists (1980), Cape. £16. 0 224 01881 7. It is a history of the birds of the world, a service to ornithologists and to those who love the world's rain forests from destruction. This informative and generously illustrated analysis of the delicate relationship between plant and animal life in the tropical rain forest is recommended by the *World Wildlife Fund*.

Wishful thinking

By Lucy Matr

W. H. MORRIS-JONES (Editor):
From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe
Behind and Beyond Lancaster House
122pp. Cass. £12.
0 7146 3167 1

The title *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe* suggests an historical account leading from the date at which Northern Rhodesia became Zambia and Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe to that when Robert Mugabe took office as Premier of the new state. This book is not quite that. The "rubric" edited by W. H. Morris-Jones suggests some kind of introduction and coordination by a distinguished student of Commonwealth politics, but what is not quite so clear is the book's one of a

series under the general editorship of Professor Morris-Jones, and it consists of a number of assessments of the state of play given as seminar papers at the Commonwealth Studies Institute at Lancaster House before the conclusion of the Lancaster House negotiations.

Politics may be the art of the possible, but economics seems to be as easy as cooking. Colin Stoneman tells whom it may concern just what he must do: "The economic independence of the new state requires foreign capital to maintain investment and output until Africans have been trained to take over; have compensation assessed by an outside authority (but pay none to the world's creditors); and maximize African participation by requiring foreign management to train the entire work force. More interesting is D. G. Clarke's assessment of the effect of sanctions, loudly proclaimed in Rhodesia, to be negative until the moment came to

demand their withdrawal. He concludes that they did eventually begin to bite, but that the worst suffered was the African bourgeoisie—a logically predictable consequence of any effective blockade.

Richard Hodder-Williams discusses the likely response of different sections of the population to reformist or radical economic policies. James Barber the relations of the new state with its neighbours. John Day goes to great lengths to demonstrate from the statements of the political leaders, and sometimes from the alliances that they have formed, that "tribalism is of no significance in Zimbabwe". He does not see far enough ahead to the time when the external enemy is less important than the internal rival. A. R. Wilkinson, the only writer to take into account the situation created by years of internal strife, more pertinently refers to "the tensions between the tribal divisions... reflected by the appearance of tribally-based political parties".



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commentary

Museum miscellany

By Christopher Brown

Watteau; British Figure Drawings; Dutch Landscape Prints of the 17th Century; British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings

That Michelangelo and Raphael, Rubens and Rembrandt, should be superbly represented at the British Museum is completely taken for granted, but that the Department of Prints and Drawings boasts the best single group of drawings by Watteau, altogether finer (though smaller in number) than that in the Louvre, comes as a surprise. It is these drawings, with four well-chosen loans from Oxford and Cambridge, which make up the first of the three small exhibitions taken from the Department's permanent collection which are on view in the Exhibition Gallery until April.

Gersaint, the picture-dealer friend for whom Watteau painted "L'Enseigne", thought that the artist's drawings, of which about a thousand survive, were better than his paintings. He said that as a painter Watteau was humble, in express "l'esprit et la vérité qu'il savait donner à son crayon". Academic opinion, on the other hand, in the formidable figure of the Comte de Caylus, considered that Watteau's inaccuracy as a draughtsman prevented him from undertaking the grand historical and allegorical canvases which he believed to be the highest goal to which a painter could aspire.

Both views can be tested in the exhibition. Very few compositional studies for Watteau's paintings survive, yet there are many drawings here in which he has proved models in the studio for individual figures, and these were often used more than once. Here we can see what Gersaint meant: in red chalk or white chalk, the elegantly coiffed and richly dressed young women possess a vivacity which was sometimes lost when they were transferred to canvas (notably in the two large Wallace Collection pictures, which cleaning has revealed as distressingly mechanical in detail). And yet for all this facility of touch, the anatomical exactitudes demanded by Caylus. The drawing of a half-naked woman seated in a chaise-longue and holding her left foot is anatomically clumsy, deficient in the modelling of individual limbs, and has little sense of three-dimensionality.

This seems to me also true of Watteau's male nudes, one of the few types of his drawings not to be found in the BM's collection. What Gersaint knew, however, and Caylus was too blinkered to grasp, was that Watteau, an artist who had a clear and independent vision, was uninterested in this type of academic naturalism. In the event, it was the prodigiously gifted young man to his severely classical bosom, which had to create a new category of painting—the *fête galante*—to accommodate him.

Horace Walpole, though disapproving, was acute: Watteau's trees, he wrote, were "tufts of plumage and furs, and trimmed up groves, that nod to each other like scenes in an opera". As an apprentice with Claude Gillot in Paris, the young Watteau was bewitched by the theatre, and a sense of theatre is rarely absent from either his drawings or paintings. Gillot's influence is clear in the elongated figures and elaborate costumes of the early drawings; especially noteworthy is the gouache drawing on brown-grey paper of a fan design with extravagant *commedia dell'arte* figures. Subsequently, working with Claude Audran at the Luxembourg Palace, Watteau was mesmerized by Rubens, making numerous copies after the Marie de Medici series. And yet, even at the feet of the revered Flemish master, he retained his individuality. Rubens's all too solid forms were lightened and refined by Watteau's chalks, and

etherealized by Watteau. It is Rubens's weighty cherubs who float effortlessly above the figures in the "Embarkation for Cythera". A near-juxtaposition (why not a direct one?) in the exhibition of Watteau's copy of a Rubens's own drawing of her is a fascinating demonstration of Watteau's single-minded, selective borrowing. He was happy to learn technical tricks like the use of red and black chalks together to strengthen the features of a face, but he remained quite uninterested in the solidity of form which is such a central concern of Rubens, whether on paper or canvas.

British Figure Drawings is not an exhibition title calculated to set the pulse racing. However, although as a theme it shows signs of strain, it does give the BM a chance to show off some fine British drawings, including a number of recent acquisitions. Among them are a splendidly raffish watercolour and pen drawing of the painter George Morland by his friend Rowlandson; Turner's large watercolour of the funeral of Sir Thomas Lawrence, at which he was a pallbearer; a superb pencil portrait of a lady by Bonington, acquired this year; a fine Victorian group, in which Frederick Sandys holds first place; Shelter Sketchbook of 1940-1; and recent acquisitions of figure drawings by Kitaj and Mackney, and last happily, by Auerbach and Leon Kossoff.

For a long time prints have taken second place to drawings in the print rooms of the world and this has been true of the British Museum as of anywhere else. However, with the relatively recent appointment of a Curator of Prints, there has been a revival of interest which has resulted in several excellent exhibitions. Dutch Landscape Prints of the 17th Century continues this welcome development. For many visitors, the names of Johannes Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch are household names, but the names of Rembrandt, Berenich and Claes van Broeckhuysen and Claes van Broeckhuysen do not trip lightly off the tongue. Yet once the eye has allowed itself to adjust from Watteau's colour to black and white, the art and inventiveness of these print-makers is not difficult to appreciate. To make the task easier, there is a recently published book by David Freedberg in the British Museum Prints and Drawings series, which provides a very valuable

Singing arms and the man

By Paul Driver

King Priam
Royal Festival Hall

Tippett's second opera is a deliberately different affair from *The Midsummer Marriage*. That was a grandly unfolding, masque-like work, involving the auditor primarily through the unprecedented opulence of its score. *Priam* is an epic drama, whose action is extremely fast-moving, whose music rigorously subverts the stage-spectacle, defining situation and mood with rapidity and concision. Pure instrumental line dominates over harmony and polyphony; there is never the feeling of an orchestral tutti. "Drum, flute and zither" (the Venetian title of an essay by Tippett) could serve as a motto for the accompaniment. The vocal writing is invariably obedient to natural speech rhythms. And the dramaticity gives unusual opportunities to an inventive director: *Priam*'s force lies in a large extent in its stark paralleling of episodes and interludes.

Could it, then, survive in the concert hall? The London Sinfonietta's seventy-fifth birthday tribute to Tippett (a preliminary to Decca's current recording of the opera) on November 21 at long last enabled us to find out.

It seemed possible that the Sinfonietta's occasional, gaucherie-like white outride painfully on the bare concert platform. Some scenes, not



Watteau, "Four studies of the head of a young woman", from the exhibition reviewed here.

Introduction to a neglected subject. For me, two print-makers stand out: the first, as might be expected, is Hercules Segers who "printed painting". Among his works on view, the "Rocky Mountain Valley with Waterfall", an etching printed in a greyish-blue ink, is the only surviving impression from this plate. The second is less well-known: Jan van de Velde is represented by fine impressions of his remarkably inno-

centive "Four Seasons" of 1617 and his "Four Times of Day", in which the heavily-lined plates were influenced by Gaudt's famous prints after Kilsheimer (shown nearby), which employ dense webs of engraved cross-hatching. After these great print-makers, there is a marked falling-off at the end of the century which whimpers to its close with the witless classicism of Isaac de Moucheron.

And (a slow ascent from lowest to highest registers) which Tippett says is meant to turn Priam into the total tragic character. The austere, understated, unrelated chords in Britten's *Billy Budd* could, perhaps, show how, in *Priam*'s terms, the necessary intensity might have been achieved. It was not to be until his next major statement, *The Vision of Saint Augustine*, that Tippett would convincingly forge "the timeless music" out of his new expressive materials.

Priam is not easy for the singer; there is never an orchestral cushion on which to rest. The cast was surely the most distinguished team of British artists that could have been assembled. Many of them were experienced in Tippett's opera, though Norman Bailey, as Priam, is not; and this was his first assumption of the role. He was in rather poor voice, unwilling to dominate as he should. But Yvonne Milton as Helen was sumptuous; Heather Harper (Hecuba), ringingly impressive; and this was his first opera. Thomas Allen's Hector and Philip Langridge's Paris.

It was a pity that compromises were again opted for in the execution of Hecuba's violin theme and Andromache's cellos merrily howl can the unison ensemble required be beyond the Sinfonietta? The frequent off-stage choral cries and the strident, anti-climatic fanfare were less than happily balanced; that can be remedied easily enough in the recording. That, for a huge impact just the same, for its own sake, the music of war alone, *Priam* is an unforgettable experience.

Whipped up

By Frances Spalding

Edward Munch
Riverside Studios

Riverside Studios have finished the conversion of their new gallery in time to catch an exhibition of Edward Munch landscapes prior to its return to Oslo. Previously shown in Newcastle and Liverpool, it represents his late period when, after a nervous breakdown in 1908, he exchanged compulsive travelling in Europe for a more settled existence in his native country. Keeping his distance from Oslo he lived alone, saw few people and seems to have turned away from the more emotive images of his previous work. Involved with a major decorative scheme for a new hall at Oslo University, he painted a large oil transmitting his rays across the Norwegian landscape, a study for which is exhibited. The image has in the past been taken to symbolize the romanticism of Munch's late work, but he told his biographer, "This last part of my life has been an effort to stand up. My path has always been along at above."

The first impression is of a raw response to landscape. A prolific artist, Munch seems to have avoided gestation and arrived immediately at the effect desired. Alert to natural phenomena, he does not pause to analyse or correct, but sweeps up shapes and colours to mirror a state of mind. For even the straight-forward landscapes found here are not free from inner disquiet. His use of violent perspective recedes into his compositions, while his colour, in an eye accustomed to the English love of judicious tonal interplay. Then, too, there is his sense of the close proximity of his paintings; work best seen at a distance and look scrappy close. Quickly drawn and often thinly painted, these canvases wear an improvisatory air and are refreshingly at their ease on the gallery's white-painted brick walls.

Munch's stature encourages one to demand more of this show than it in fact gives. One wonders how the man who once heard "a loud could have seen content with a hand on the image as that of the rising sun. Elsewhere, certain paintings suggest that he is merely working old ideas, whipping his lines with manufactured passion. He himself admitted: "I tried once again, as on a gramophone, to render the vision of emotions." If few of these paintings have the intensity of his best-known subjects, they do all strike up a psychological rapport, in their rapacious pursuit of sensation.

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Sleepy sub-texts

By Victoria Glendinning

The Happy Autumn Fields
BBC TV

It simply doesn't work. The story of classic Elizabeth Bowen—fluid, atmospheric, supernatural—and one of her best. A young woman, sleeping in a crumbling house, "dreams" the life of a family in another place another time, on one crucial autumn evening. Two inseparable lovers are about to be separated by the love of one of them for her brother's friend; it is the end of childhood, and of an era. The contrast is startling, in the story as in the play, between the only brutal modern world and the island sensibilities of the past—even though the dreamer in Elizabeth Bowen's wartime story lies in a house racked by bombs, and William Trevor in his adaptation has her sleeping, most unconqueringly, in a house being demolished by bulldozers.

William Trevor and director Peter Hamilton faithfully follow the "dreamed" Edwardian family on their evening walk across the sunlit stubble of the cornfield, and here into the drawing-room of their house (not spacious enough). The trouble is that everyone, the dreamer and her boyfriend and the family from the past, speaks with a sonorous flatness, a meaningless meaninglessness, that makes the play seem like some cultural relic of uncertain origins translated from a foreign language. There are

Squadron Leader Who

By J. S. Bratton

Sore Ache
The Tricycle Theatre

The Wakefield Tricycle Company has established themselves in a London base, the Tricycle Theatre. Its sturdy name matches the physical impression the theatre gives. It is in the Forsters' Hall in Kilburn High Street, a capacious building from the days when public meeting places were reckoned to need plenty of cubic feet, surrounded by plenty of solid brick and tiles. Restored in colours the original places would not have fancied, it makes an attractive and substantial fringe theatre.

Its second production, *Snoo Wilson's Space Ache*, is a satiric fable, employing 1960s-ish SF to tell a tale for the times; its "future" is a dystopian vision reflecting current social crises. The first scenes seem rather disorienting and rushing attacks on broad targets. There is an Orson Welles casual murder behind a sofa, and an episode in which a judge, that comendous Establishment Aunt Sally, is literally wheeled in. In the early stages of the play, the history of Nick Bick's music seems intended as a comment on the mass-culture dreams it peddles; it nevertheless has the effect of slowing the action.

When Christine, an unemployed school-leaver, is cryogenically frozen, the play tightens up. With the state's dubious promise that she will be returned to life in some future Golden Age, her bottled-up anger is shipped off for storage in space. We watch the voyage out through the side of an inter-planetary freighter, opened like a sardine tin to reveal a crew of ex-RAF types, flying with cynical expertise: the captain, though, fears the worst.

It is used to explore the play's overriding concern: the nature of the relationship between the body and the self. The body of Christine—a wonderful performance by Frances Barber, all thighs and cowlike truculence—is coolly used not only by men and Neptunians, but by herself: she insists, despite all warnings, on embarking on the voyage to the future. The struggling self her body inadequately serves is educated not by its experiences, but by those few contacts with others which make it a not physical. In the end she manages to ask the vital question, "Why are you all so cruel?" and is sharply told by one of the few apparently sensitive male characters that she has no right to talk, having been as selfish as anyone, her selfishness as selfish as anyone. Her selfish response is the final irony of the play, or whether it is a lapse into male chauvinism on Snoo Wilson's part.

commentary

Piecing the picture together

By Douglas Johnson

Napoleon
London Film Festival

The story of Napoleon can only be dramatic. It hardly matters whether the paintings of him on board the *Emperor's* ship, the *Bellerophon*, were good or indifferent. The brooding Emperor is the stuff of tragedy. The man who has held the whole world in his sway stands defeated and powerless, reflecting on his destiny, already a legendary figure. But it is more than a story of a rise and fall. There is an extra symmetry in the life which begins in an island and which ends in an island. Abel Gance had the idea of building his film around such a symmetry. We are shown the young Bonaparte studying in the military college at Brienne, then a geography lesson about islands. He is first of all shown Corsica, and he writes with proud energy about the most beautiful land in the world. It is then shown St Helena, "a small island", and falls into a deep slumber, which the meditations and kickings of his companions cannot disturb.

Gance started his epic film in 1925, and followed the life only up to the first triumphs of the Italian campaign in 1796 (when Napoleon was twenty-six). We cannot guess how he would have pursued it, but there are some hints. When the young general is given the command of the army in Italy, for example, before leaving Paris he goes to the deserted chamber of the Convention and communes with the ghosts of the great leaders of the Revolution. He swears to remain true to the Republic. Would not the ghosts of Saint-Just (played by Gance himself) have taken revenge on the Republican hero who made himself an Emperor? In Kevin Brownlow's reconstruction such speculations are made more pertinent by the actual score, arranged and in part composed by Carl Davis, which frequently evokes the *Eroica* Symphony.

It has been customary to treat Gance as the great might-have-been of the French cinema, a disorderly and impossible genius who could never harness his abilities or control his imagination. Who is the greatest director of France? "Abel Gance, hélas" is the customary answer, which precedes a comparison between him and Victor Hugo. Now there is no more of the complete version of the film, lasting some five and a half hours, it is clear that this view is not justified.

How is it appropriate to look on the work? One approach is to see it simply as a display of prodigious cinematic techniques, with rapid cutting, free use of the hand-held camera, wide-angle lens, tinting, super-imposition, and the tripartite screen process. But *Napoleon* has a remarkable unity of conception and technique. It treats history neither unnecessarily cavalierly, nor as a collection of museum pieces, but

with an effective mixture of shrewd thoughtfulness and romantic exuberance.

The snow-fight at the College of Brienne, in which the young Bonaparte distinguishes himself, sets the tone from the beginning. The camera is literally plunged into the snow and becomes part of the frenzied battle of snowballs. The movements of the boys across the snow are rapid and rhythmic, while those who watch, members of the teaching staff and the scullion Tristan Fleuri, are stationary or slow. The face of Napoleon himself, superimposed over the battle action, is serious, attentive; only at the end does his expression break into a smile.

Later scenes were shot with the camera immersed in water when Napoleon is at sea in a storm, in feathers when the boys fight with pillows, in mud at the siege of Toulon, in the bodies and clothes of dancers at the *Ball des Contendans*. Crowds and armies are moved about with speedy precision. And there are always watchers: Tristan Fleuri at Toulon, or the woman who observes the uproar in the Convention and comments, "They are too great for us". In all this, Napoleon, Albert Dieudonné, is often seen in close-up, thoughtful, dreaming, despondent, but sometimes with a smile showing on his lips—did not Stendhal write in 1804 that Napoleon had a "sourire de théâtre", in which the eyes never smiled?

Although the big scenes are the most famous—especially where Robespierre, surrounded by a howling, hostile Convention, walks up the steps of the assembly, fearful before so much violence, or the astonishingly powerful final three-screen scenes of the army in Italy—this is also a more intimate film of observers. Lieutenant Bonaparte sees fragments of a great event from the window of his tiny room. Later, he writes out his orders on a series of administrative matters and writes to Josephine, and we see the trees rushing past the window of his carriage and in escorting officers taking his messages. We see through half-open doors, through telescopes, around curtains; the image is often an inset. It is a film attentive to shadows in which a character is discovered by the audience at the same moment as by the people in the film, as when the victor of Toulon is found asleep with his head on a drum.

Scenes, then, are arranged like pictures. The references to David are made all the more explicit by the little drummer boy who inquires about Vienna; the echo of Daumier is reinforced by the legal office in which the scribes are plying their quills. But the melodrama is rarely embarrassing. The episode of Violino and her love for Napoleon, for example, is softened by the beautiful Annabelle playing her; and if the revelation that it is Napoleon who wishes to sink Napoleon's ship smacks of Sacha Guitry, the comparison only serves to distinguish between a director of talent and one of genius.

From Southern Dawn

An aeroplane where one drinks champagne—a Caravelle—the Captain announces will fly at an "effective" average speed of 500 miles an hour. Practically, I'm sitting still, drinking champagne (poured into my glass in greater abundance for the honoured man of letters): and I know that "effectively" I have no more books in me, nothing more to write. I am not fit for that which "practically" I am, as if I were made to stay at the bottom of the pile, not here, on top, the boss, in a Caravelle, blending Corfu with the Mazzoni plain (down there, dotted with clouds), and Rome, with the Tiber just one of thousands of Jordans. Have I to become poor again? Unknown? A lad? "Effectively", I don't know how to be a father, the boss. My fame, my influence, is ridiculous. Father, what is happening to me?

Pier Paolo Pasolini

Translated from the Italian by N. S. Thompson

Oxford
University Press

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book in 1941. It was his masterpiece and monument, *American Renaissance*.

The next crisis came eleven years later. Matthiessen was again on leave, struggling through a book on Theodore Dreiser. When he had almost finished it, he found he could neither go on working nor face the prospect of entering a mental hospital again. This time, moreover, he had no beloved companion to alleviate his depression. On March 31, 1950, he took a room on the twelfth floor of a Boston hotel, then went to dinner with some old Harvard friends. He returned in the small hours, took off his skull and bones key, and jumped out of the window.

Howard Fast, the proletarian novelist, announced in the *New York Times* that Matthiessen had been "a victim of the Cold War." This may have been true, but in a more complex sense than Fast would have admitted. Matthiessen's suicide note said that he was "exhausted" and no longer able "to be of use to [his] profession and [his] friends." Then he added a postscript: "How much the state of the world has to do with my state of mind I do not know. But as a Christian and a socialist believing in international peace, I find myself terribly oppressed by the present tensions." In January Matthiessen had been distressed by the conviction of Alger Hiss for perjury after he denied Whitaker Chambers's accusation that he had spied for Russia. Soon afterwards, Senator McCarthy burst into notoriety by charging that the State Department was riddled with Communists. Just before Matthiessen's death, McCarthy had denounced Philip Jessup and Owen Lattimore as Soviet agents; both were prominent academics who had been seconded to government service (they were eventually cleared). It was evident that the hunt was beginning, with the universities as a principal target; and

Matthiessen must have feared being pilloried as a homosexual as well as a red.

However, the walls were also closing in from the other side. Matthiessen took a close interest in Czechoslovakia, where he had taught in the summer of 1947, and in March, 1950, the Czech Government, forcing the Christian churches into submission, let Masaryk, with whom Matthiessen had been friendly, had died two years earlier when he fell—or was pushed—from a window shortly after the communist seizure of power. Matthiessen must have realized that the kind of politics he had chosen—founded on Christian idealism, the American tradition of radical democracy, and a hankering for intimacy with "the workers"—was taking him into a cul-de-sac. The whole era of "Western" "fellow-travelling" with the Soviet Union was nearing its end; soon the death of Stalin and the Hungarian rebellion would finish it off. At some point in the 1950s, Matthiessen might have pronounced his earlier views; but the prospect of doing so under duress, with men like McCarthy and Nixon gloating over his fall, must have been more than a man of his pride could face.

Looking at Matthiessen's milieu, one inevitably draws a parallel with the group around Blum, Burgess, Philby and Maclean. The comparison does not flatter the English side. Matthiessen lived every moment of his life by principle, and died by it too; he could never have ended his days as a Soviet pensioner, nor adopted a devious conformity and relished the rewards that went with it. Guy Burgess would probably have dismissed him as a naive, self-tormenting prig. Yet what enabled Burgess and his friends to survive, where Matthiessen could not, was precisely a certain pettiness and frivolity. Some of this came from a peculiarly English

style of left-wing homosexual dandyism, seasoned with a dash of boyish mischief—a pose caught in Burgess's remark that he could never travel by train because he would be obliged to seduce the engine driver. In addition, the Burgess group shared a genuine cynicism about their country's condition and prospects. Matthiessen was also somewhat disillusioned with England after his two years at Oxford; but his reaction was to devote most of his critical energy to raising the status of American literature. He deserves a good share of the credit for its having become recognized as one of the great national literatures. Matthiessen's critical studies of T. S. Eliot and Henry James helped to establish the reputation of the one, and revive that of the other; but *American Renaissance* was by far the broadest and most ambitious of his works. It took as its subject "one extraordinarily concentrated moment of expression" — the years from 1850 to 1855, when Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Emerson and Thoreau were at their creative and most intensely involved with each other's projects. The major works of these years included *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby-Dick*, *Leaves of Grass*, and *Walden*.

Matthiessen argued that such a constellation of masterpieces could have come together by pure chance; rather, they were the mature fruit of a movement that began three quarters of a century before with the American revolution. He believed, furthermore, that these great nineteenth-century writers had created "a literature four hundred years in the making"; they had produced an age in the American nation, one that still directed, to be consulted and acted upon, "reading the lyric, heroic and tragic expression of our first great age." Matthiessen proclaimed, "we can feel the challenge of our still undiminished resources." Ninety years later, alas, he found that neither America's resources nor his own

were sufficient to sustain a life of honour.

Louis Hyde's book is an invaluable study of a career, but much remains to be told. Hyde is not a professional scholar but a humanist who became a friend of Matthiessen's at Yale and inherited the correspondence with Cheney after his death. Though Hyde gives the essential story of Matthiessen's homosexuality, he does it so discreetly that one is left with rather a drawing-room view of the relation between the two men; surely, one feels, there must have been more physical passion and rough edges in their daily life than appear in this book. About Matthiessen's political convictions Hyde is even more defensive; he omits the crucial postscript to the suicide note, and gives only a bare outline of the political activities that absorbed so much of Matthiessen's attention. This mainly concerned with illuminating Matthiessen's domestic life, but a full-scale biography would surely give quite a different sense of his place in American intellectual history.

One is left, finally, pondering the rewards and the limits of an academic life—the life that Trilling seemed to find so much easier and more natural than Matthiessen ever could. Trilling, the first Jew to gain tenure in the Columbia English Department, endured some ugly slights on the way to achievement, but after the appearance of his book on Matthew Arnold in 1939 he became a steadily influential figure at Columbia and in the American intellectual establishment. Where the shoe pinched, often seemed, was that America was not English enough for him. In America, he wrote, "the real feel the challenge of our still undiminished resources." Ninety years later, alas, he found that neither America's resources nor his own

were sufficient to sustain a life of honour.

Left wondering about those who managed to write novels on a ferret basis—for example, Melville, Dostoevsky, Lawrence, Joyce. Matthiessen evidently did not share Trilling's almost casual attitude towards the class "society." By temperament he was a Bostonian rather than a New Yorker, heir to the New England traditions of puritanism, scandalism and the high standards of personal conscience. Trilling, whereas Matthiessen could be said to point his ambitions downwards towards the ideals of Twain and Whitman, a broad American radicalism. One memoir tells of Matthiessen's visits to Irish pubs in Boston, where he tried to be friendly with working men (and, inevitably, stood out conspicuously as a rich Harvard professor). Trilling, of course, would never have gone into the pub at all. Matthiessen was "Matty" to his friends and colleagues; one cannot laugh at Trilling with a nickname.

One should not, however, sentimentalize Matthiessen—especially since he would never have wanted to be remembered in that way. Though he wrote the "note" that Trilling never could, his ductivity was often gained at the cost of using his prose as a blunt instrument, stripped of the decorative weight of the more polished Trilling's style. Matthiessen was a tense, prickly man, who could be destructive to his associates; Trilling was almost exclusively polite, and meticulously so, to helping students and younger scholars. Simply by being so durable and prominent, he evoked the familiar assortment of academic calamities and completed the fatal cycle that starts with being provocative and ends with being passed. Matthiessen, dying early and by his own hand, paid himself of guilt, and left his errors in the critical enterprise a live on, uneasily, with their own.

Of dawn and the river

By William S. McFeely

CHARLES H. NICHOLS (Editor): *Anna Bontemps-Langston Hughes Letters, 1925-1967*. New York: Dodd, Mead. Distributed in London by Transatlantic Book Service, 1980. 0-296 07687-4

"The last time I visited Louisiana," wrote Anna Bontemps—in an essay entitled "Why I Returned"—the house in which I was born was freshly painted. Why I expected the place to be rundown and the neighborhood decayed is not clear, but somewhere in my subconscious the notion had been planted and allowed to grow that where Negroes lived, it was important for him to admit to having thought about blacks in such a way because frankness was essential as he confronted another, larger, issue. On this trip home, Bontemps reflected on the results of the "quiet companionship" which existed under slavery and which, as generations succeeded each other, made clear, racial delineations in America "increasingly conical." "There are," he wrote in 1965, "old folks who say, knowing something of the city, they would be a bit of money that some of those 'white' women seen on television spitting at Negro children integrating New Orleans public schools a year or two ago were themselves as colored as Adam Clayton Powell," the "black" Congressman from New York's Harlem.

Bontemps's own reactions to the fact of "quiet companionship", of which he too was a product, were more benign. He even managed to be amused. It was as though William Faulkner had been looking at him, when he prophesied at the time of his death, "in a few hundred years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings." Bontemps would have caught the implication, but meanwhile, in the middle decades of the twentieth century, he knew that he was a "colored" writer, faced with the job of getting those "the other persuasion" to publish his books. This last problem, and other concerns of their craft, rather than a preoccupation with racial questions or intimate revelations of their private lives, dominated the lives

of hundreds of letters which have been published from among the twenty-three hundred that Bontemps exchanged with his close friend, Langston Hughes, over nearly half a century.

The two men, both born in 1892, with similar middle-class backgrounds and education, had closely parallel careers—and they even looked a little alike. Bontemps, who had left Louisiana as a small child, was raised and schooled in California and found his way to New York. There he met Hughes who, born in Joplin, Missouri, had come to the city by way of Ohio and Mexico. Hughes had left Columbia University to ship out as a seaman and work in Manhattan, but returned to New York to write poetry and share an exuberant new cultural life with a remarkable group of painters, sculptors, musicians, and writers whose work constituted what came to be called the Harlem Renaissance. Both Bontemps and Hughes had poems in Alain Locke's anthology, *The New Negro*, which in 1925 proclaimed that Afro-American culture was more than lamentation, sung as

spirituals, of the had old days of slavery or effusions of genteel prose which pretended that there had been no such thing as race.

The two writers accepted the subject-matter of a segregated society assigned to them and Hughes, in his finest poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", tells his racial history:

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young,
I built my hut near the Congo and
I lulled me to sleep,
I looked upon the Nile and raised
the pyramids above it,
I heard the singing of the Mississippi
This odyssey into his past brought
him to the city of his birth:
I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers,
My soul has grown deep like the
rivers.

Bontemps, in "The Daybreakers", chose a different image, the dawn, calling out for strife or violence in order to bring about a better world but not expressing a commitment to make all his work part of the task of "beating a way for

the rising sun". The two men had faith that the sun would indeed rise, but there was a good deal of brush to clear from the path before it could be seen. With poems, stories, novels, plays, books for young people, and other, on historical subjects, the two writers explored the Afro-American world. Among the plays was *St. Louis Woman*, adapted from Bontemps's novel, *God Send Sunday*, which not only introduced Pearl Bailey to Broadway but also disturbed middle-class black playgoers who did not want white audiences to see Negro heroes who frequented nightclubs and racetracks and had bawdy fun.

Of all their work, probably more reached a wider audience than Hughes's famous simple stories in which Hughes intended to set forth a straight-on racial matter. Jesse B. Simple brought folk-wisdom to bear on injustice: "A bar is something to lean on," said Simple. "You lean on bars very often," I remarked. "I do," said Simple. "Why?"

"Because everything else I lean on falls down."

Among the things that "fell down" in this particular case was black, for the same job, the opportunity to become President of the United States, and protection under the law.

"You figure the Constitution has fallen down on you?" "I do," said Simple. "Just like it fell on that poor Negro boy last month. Did anybody out there stop to think about that?" The humor hurt.

The depression of the 1930s ended the Harlem Renaissance and Bontemps, with his wife and a flock of children, moved to Tennessee where he became the librarian at Fisk University, while Hughes, a bachelor, stayed in New York. Two friends wrote constantly about their work because, even at the time, Jim Crow trains to college towns or gave money to pay rent in Negro colleges, they were first and foremost writers. In only a few letters is race the direct subject, but almost always there is an allusion which tells the reader that the authors are black.

Simply, a fact of their lives and there is no inconsistency between their resistance to wrongs done to their people and the quiet, yet joyful, confidence with which they lived long enough to see some of their letters packed off to Yale University and to be tagged Uncle Tom's in the bargain. They enjoyed both indignities.

Hughes, whose early work was best, died in 1967. Bontemps, less well known (and indeed still coming into his own), did some of his best writing in the years before his death in 1973. In 1966, he wrote: "Some of my students write beautifully (better than anyone I know) about the Renaissance, etc. (I am sure they are). The year before he died, Bontemps collected some of that work in *Remembered*, a book which did a splendid job of portraying accurately the richly creative and energetic black writers of the 1920s. And the black writers of the 1930s: no one did a better job of reminding people of the continued vitality of their work than Bontemps himself. A splendidly handsome, confident, white-haired figure, warm, with students, quietly inspiring them to look at their world as he did, not only with unflinching honesty but also with kindness.

Then, Le Grand Bey

What games—on wet sands, by stakes, into shadow and out, what long-shadowed Games. What hootings through cupped hands (Being owls), under sea battlements. Sands, sands, gleaming, being swallowed By still warm advance of dark. Being, yes, a chief, leading, scalping.

It's you. Last home, At that stake we call Rome.

To-morrow then, when it's low tide Again.

That was his life; that fancy, those Games. And in his will—after the real Thing (they say), after power, exile, Being destitute, return, grandeur, fame, Folly, pride of imagining (in Prose), pain—to lie, to lie grandly Unnamed, where thrif is, and shit and lift Of gulls, under huge blocks of wind-dividing Stone—to know not a thing, to have become Such ignorant bones. So to remain. Extinguished. Nothing. Again.

St Malo

Geoffrey Grigson

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KH

A question of perspective

By John Whale

HERBERT J. GANS:

Deciding What's News
393pp. Conrable, £7.95.
0 09 46330 8

It is odd how journalism, which seems an almost embarrassingly simple business to those of us who practise it, is a living, pulsing, outside-inquirer as regularly as it fascinates them. Herbert J. Gans is a Columbia sociologist who examined four New York news organizations in detail over a span of four years, and in the end he missed every point in sight.

The four were the CBS and NBC early-evening television news shows, and two news magazines—*Newsweek* and *Time*. At periods between 1965 and 1978 Professor Gans watched the staff at work and cast up their output. He concludes that journalists are top people, or very nearly, who spend their lives reporting the activities of a narrow range of other top people. Even so, he says, a good many top people get overlooked, like captains of industry or generals; and "ordinary" people are left out altogether. The range of subjects covered by Gans' notices, is similarly restricted; there is a lot about medicine, but not much about dentistry, plumbing or car repair.

What is needed, the Professor believes, is "multiperspectival" news, tapped from a much larger number of news sources than at present, not merely government, but citizens affected by government,

and so on. That would mean more news organizations to publish it; and that in turn would necessitate a government-funded Endowment for News, which would bankroll the extra outlets and also those "organized or unorganized sources" who can demonstrate their present inability to gain access to national journalists.

Little harm is done, probably, by airing this kind of observation once again. At the same time, it might be helpful to offer an alternative, practitioner's view of why journalists make the decisions they do. They try to write (and broadcast) about what people are interested in. This is not primarily a commercial, but a human, choice: nobody sets out to be a bore. They establish whether a certain topic interests them. The New York Journalists who von Professor Gans's disapproval by saying of their me it will bore them "were in fact giving both an accurate and a defensible account of how choices are made. "Access to national journalists," which he wishes to ease, is not difficult. Journalists seldom put the phone down on any motorway action, committees reach their desks, and are taken out of the envelope and scanned. If they are then thrown away, it is because the eye scanning them glezes.

This criterion is not just the only practicable one: it is also perfectly accurate. Journalists represent their audience—sometimes all too accurately. The notion that they are an elite cannot survive in face of any serious study of the sentences are composed and delivered on one of the world's most

admitted news organizations, BBC radio; or of sporting newspapers on either side of the Atlantic. Not all the audience can be represented, certainly. A high proportion of the advertisements on the CBS evening news programme used to be—was still be—for false-teeth fixatives; and the advertising men had doubtless read their viewers' right. Now no end would be served by recruiting one's editorial staff mainly among denture-wearers. Yet somewhere on the CBS news staff the attitudes of most denture-wearers would find an echo.

Pow journalists are hardliners, either politically or in their current field of work, and for the best of reasons: listening to voices on all sides of a question, they realize how complicated human affairs are and how unlikely extremes are to be right. The assumption they have in the culture they come out of, Professor Gans reproaches his New Yorkers with having a bias towards both "responsibility capitalism" and "small-town pastoralism": growth is good, but cities are bad. Ingeniously, he traces these views to the influence of the Progressive movement in the United States, the early years of which held among western European journalists. They are in the air. As they are replaced in Western society at large they will change among journalists.

So the reason why "while brank-thoroughs in the sciences are covered, those in plumbing or auto repairs are not" is clear enough. Most people are intrigued by their own internal plumbing, but not much by the maze of tubes and tanks in their house or car; as long as it works they are happy that it should remain a mystery. The social sciences in particular, Professor Gans complains, are under-reported. Also, the same cruel explanation applies: they are seldom interesting enough. His own book succinctly documents the long-standing charge that sociology tells people what they knew already.

The doctrine of Interestingness does not, in capable hands, narrow

the range of subjects covered, because to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. For years, the idea of extensive coverage of fire risks in chemical works would have been greeted at editorial conferences with audible yawns; and that would have been a justifiable judgement, however deplorable, because very few people outside the chemical industry would have read it. On the weekend of the explosion at Flixborough in Lincolnshire in 1974 it was possible to carry lengthy positions of the problem and have them exhaustively read. Everything comes round; even the social sciences.

Once a subject has been chosen, shed light on it. Another thing Professor Gans has not understood is that answering journalists' questions is not compulsory. The reason why tycoons and service chiefs are not often reported is that they employ them—figures whom journalists do not greatly regard. Politicians, on the other hand, need public notice; they put themselves in journalists' way. As for "ordinary" people, whose absence from the news Professor Gans laments, only a sociologist would suppose that they have any real existence at all. Journalists know that there is a sense in which everyone is ordinary and a sense in which no one is. Their special discovery, which other citizens can suspect, is that ordinary people are in fact painfully ordinary except in the one respect which has made them eminent. Cabinet ministers go in fear of losing their jobs; judges tell themselves lies about their failing powers; reverend theologians wench. As against that, ordinary people also know that no one is typical case without distortion. They do quite a lot of that kind of selection, true. But they know that each case is different, and that you cannot be comprehensive unless you are interminably long.

The question of length is important. Most journalists can see the peril of bigness. There was a force in the slogan with which the *Sunday Telegraph*, in its early days,

commended itself over its rivals with the paper you can finish with, their own over-extended interest in news, journalists aware that there is a limit to the time or the inclination to consume in a day. For the layman, the sensible journalist would avoid vision across bulletins running more than an hour or newspapers more than three to read. It would invite neglect. And floundering from public funds would hardly be disaster. It would intensify the reluctance to the point where the revenue from readers and advertisers dropped sharply; more money would be needed; the taxpayer, through his representatives, would protest; funds would have to be rationed; if they had a choice of which news organizations and which interest groups should be allowed to keep their troopers in the trough would introduce straight forward political control.

Journalism is a random business, an orgy to remain so, since any remedy for its lack of comprehensiveness is worse than the disease. The best it can ever claim is that when it is properly done, it is as far as it goes. That itself is no mean defence. Professor Gans is in fact painfully ordinary except in the one respect which has made him eminent. Cabinet ministers go in fear of losing their jobs; judges tell themselves lies about their failing powers; reverend theologians wench. As against that, ordinary people also know that no one is typical case without distortion. They do quite a lot of that kind of selection, true. But they know that each case is different, and that you cannot be comprehensive unless you are interminably long.

The medicine of minted words

By Gay Clifford

CHARLOTTE WOLFF:
Mindlight
312pp. Quartet Books, £8.95.
0 7043 2253 6

Charlotte Wolff wanted to study philosophy and literature, but was persuaded by her parents to take up medicine. The little-page of her autobiography gives her as "Charlotte Wolff M.D.", suggesting that being a doctor is a rather important part of her view of herself. Yet at the end of the book she says:

"My religious life has been poetry. Minting words in the joys and pains of a mental birth, I have found a way to a more personal Self. . . . Neither poetry nor philosophy was a proper profession for me. I am not a woman of the twenties and early thirties. She is grateful that she studied medicine, because she realized that medicine could be a feeding ground for poetry, and an antidote against too much inwardness. My rational choice not only equipped me for an independent life, but also nourished my imagination through human experience."

Entirely plausible, a connection between being a doctor and being a poet, even without the great examples of Maimonides and Chekhov (whom she cites) and William Carlos Williams' connections of observation, analysis, and sheer gut instinct and affection. But what is slightly disconcerting about *Mindlight* is that it has so little either of sharp observation and description or of generous and carefully articulated passion.

Charlotte Wolff trained at Freiburg and Berlin, and, forced by anti-Semitism to leave her practice in Freiburg, fled to Paris and thence to London. She did not manage to have her credentials accepted until 1952; nearly twenty years of going on with her researches and her ding-

nostic work without being recognized as a qualified doctor. It is perhaps not surprising she should assert these qualifications. Her work has always had the curative of the marginal—both for its physiological and psychological diagnosis, and for its research into sexuality and lesbianism. *Love Between Women* (1971) and *Bisexuality: A Study* (1977) have earned her acclaim, and also, it must be noticed, a great deal of justifiable criticism from radical bisexuals and lesbians.

The puzzle of reading this autobiography is that the facts of her life command respect and engage sympathy, yet her account of it tends to dispel both. One is forced to remember that autobiography, like other forms, has necessary conventions. At the beginning of her account, and in its conclusion, Charlotte Wolff talks about the way in which writing about one's own life entails a process of analysis why one did what one did. Yet her account of the Weimar republic, and of Paris, and of England, is curiously self-analysis sundered rather than self-absorbed. There is one unintentionally revealing tale of going to see *Arsenic and Old Lace* with two women friends, who laughed when a character was bumped off.

I was unable to find this play a laughing matter. I thought my friends inhuman and indeed perverse. . . . How odd that you would laugh! . . . they said. We went back to our seats. By then I had got quite depressed. They took no notice of me. I did not realise how safe these women were. How sure of themselves they were. It was their sense of security which made it possible for them to laugh at crime.

This kind of self-absorption, which in autobiography needs some translation, even if it is a translation of the autobiographical impulse, has historical (and scholarly) consequences. Dr Wolff was fortunate enough to know Walter Benjamin, his wife Dora, and the sculptress Julia Cohen, whom she also loved. She knew that Benjamin's essay on Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* was in part inspired by his own experience of civilized middle-class marriage. She then says that, despite its importance, only minor works by Benjamin have been published in English (New Left Books and others might demur). She knew the painter Balinese, through his mother, and his wife, who was a witness of one of his vile public rages. Yet she records her outrage, and her awareness that Balinese is a painter of genius, without suggesting that his baseness might have something to do with the odd brutal chic of his works. She was her lover Pierre Roché, and from his, and refers to Roché's novel, *Julius et Jim*, and to Truffaut's film of it. But she gives no indication as to whether she feels that the fictional expression of that violent, de-layered dream of a benign ménage à trois has any connection with its origins.

Dr Wolff had friends and tolerant parents and generous and were quite untroubled by her lesbianism and rather demanding dependence; she not only survived being persecuted and marginalized, but also enjoyed the unceasing hedonism of Berlin in the 1920s, the company of distinguished poets and writers, and a kind of loyal support from several lovers and acquaintances. She has recently been warmly welcomed and acclaimed by feminist groups in Berlin. It seems a classic example of the favourite life of obscurity, yet the spirit is anxious, expecting alights, and noting inadequacies even when friends promise flats and love and stimulus. It is saddening that such benefits should not produce a more benign literature.

Brief hauntings

by Julia Briggs

MARY McCauley:

Dark Forces
A Series of Suspense and Supernatural Horror
Ed. MacDonald, £6.95.
0 351 04465 6

Dark Forces is a fat, rather formulaic anthology of the weird and supernatural, good value in a portable way, since it contains twenty-two stories and a novella. The authors are mainly American, and in his eagerness to include big game, Kirby McCauley has

watched his brief a little—Joyce Carol Oates is represented by a story that may be allegorical, but is certainly neither horrific nor supernatural. The majority of the pieces trace the disruption of the unknown, an ancient or other-planish horror, into a realistic modern setting, sometimes so realistically presented that the slang presents problems on this side of the Atlantic. In his preface the editor of inner fears in controlled circumstances, yet there is now the danger that such fantasy seems only a feeble distraction from an oppressive, possible future. Stephen King's novella "The Mist" with a lot of West-Worldish nightmarish, seems a picnic compared to the fear of nuclear war. But setting aside the all too plausible prophecies of doom that haunt this volume, there are a lot of delightful shivery moments to be had from it.

PETER C. SMITH (Editor):
Haunted Shores
206pp. William Kimber, £5.25.
0 7183 0157 9

Peter Smith has assembled an interesting anthology of ghost stories on the subject not of the sea itself but of "haunted shores". It is a good field, and the editor sensibly avoids some less familiar classics with lively new work. The first story, Jon Eyre's "Granny's Gift", One making a point for Peter Somerville's haunted seaside holiday "Rich and Strange", which well deserves a place in such a collection.

MARY ELIZABETH COUNTESSMAN:
Half in Shadow
192pp. William Kimber, £4.95.
0 7183 0287 7

Mary Elizabeth Countessman, fourteen of whose stories are reprinted in *Half in Shadow*, was a contributor to *Weird Tales* in its heyday, and to read the tales is to be reminded of the extraordinarily high standard that the magazine maintained. One of her stories, "The Enfield Poltergeist", is a "Handful of Silver" is the tale of the Wandering Jew; "The Shot Tower Ghost" ultimately derives from a device of E. T. A. Hoffman. "The Three Marked Pennies" from Mark Twain, and "The Unwanted" from Kipling. "They"—yet they are all related to the unusual conviction and an exceptional attention to detail and from their vividly conveyed settings, the remote mountains of Virginia of the steamy Faulknerian South. Carefully written, with a human faces (presumably not its own), thoughtfully pre-wrapped in the appropriate paper, through walls. Spoons were bent (Uri Geller was still in vogue) and quantities of spirits, some long since dead, manifested themselves, including the chief psychic investigator's daughter, who had been killed in a motor accident the previous year. Several mediums described objects and people to be seen in the house and one suggested that the daughters were reincarnated witches. At one stage, one of the daughters admitted responsibility, but the investigators were now so profoundly convinced of the authenticity of the phenomena, that all their hostility and suspicion was directed towards scepticism. The account of how they arrived at this conviction is fascinating, both for its unsparing relation of absurdities and for its dogged determination that some otherworldly significance must lurk beneath so many apparently ludicrous, sordid and pointless incidents.

MARY WILLIAMS:
The Dark God
A Novel of the Occult and other Supernatural Stories
152pp. William Kimber, £4.95.
0 7183 0137 4

Nice Aleynne Street has lost her square-jawed, rugged boy-friend, Adam, to her lasciviously beautiful half-sister, Lucinda, who has left off the shoulder-bite and the under the spell of evil. Lucinda is a witch, who plays a mean piano, and has local ladies to leap into bed with him. He also organizes open-air parties in celebration of magical Celtic festivals, the

best of which are patronized by the Great God Pan; the book offers a number of supernatural raps. Further complications are provided by other bourgeois couples, unsuccessfully trying to enjoy retirement in this spiritually overpopulated corner of Cornwall; but what with prehistoric boys, burnt witches and a naughty rector who fancies one of the witches, there is never a moment's peace. "Was it possible that tainted atmosphere could linger and poison the very characters moving within its orbit?" asks the author. "If so, then how unfortunate for the inhabitants of the village." Exactly—at the very least, they ought to be entitled to a rent rebate.

The author of *The Dark God*, Mary Williams, is Cornish herself, so she should presumably know. She has a happy way with clichés, both in her language, occasionally varying them with a charming malapropism all her own: "Aleyne was more curious and titivated by the business than she admitted. 'Tritivated' though was hardly the word, Adam thought. . . . Quite so.

R. CHUTWYND-HAYES:
The Fantastic World of Kamellar
A Book of Vampires and Chouls.
192pp. William Kimber, £5.50.
0 7183 0367 9

It is symptomatic that one of the stories in R. Chutwynd-Hayes's *The Fantastic World of Kamellar* should be called "Looking for something to suck". Since the notion of the horrible communion finds expression in the eating and drinking of people by vampires, ghuls, white worms (et al.) Anyone may turn into a vampire at the drop of a bat, and many a fountain of blood spurts up from a sucked heart. The author has not decided whether a shudder or a snigger is the more appropriate reaction, and this may explain his failure to sell his self-satisfied psychic detective St. Clair, along with his mobile sidekick, to a television company.

The longest piece here, "Kamellar" belongs to that modish kind of science fiction in which the protagonist finds himself in an alternative world with these forms and features derive in some sense from his own mind. God turns up as "a bald-headed man . . . seated on a plain wooden armchair at the centre of the universe" proffering oracular remarks (a device nicely parodied in the introduction). The longest piece here, "Kamellar" belongs to that modish kind of science fiction in which the protagonist finds himself in an alternative world with these forms and features derive in some sense from his own mind. God turns up as "a bald-headed man . . . seated on a plain wooden armchair at the centre of the universe" proffering oracular remarks (a device nicely parodied in the introduction). The longest piece here, "Kamellar" belongs to that modish kind of science fiction in which the protagonist finds himself in an alternative world with these forms and features derive in some sense from his own mind. God turns up as "a bald-headed man . . . seated on a plain wooden armchair at the centre of the universe" proffering oracular remarks (a device nicely parodied in the introduction).

GUY LYON PLAYFAIR:
This House is Haunted
An Investigation of the Enfield Poltergeist
288pp. Souvenir Press, £6.95.
0 285 62443 1

The poltergeist that haunted an Enfield council house, the subject of Mr Playfair's *This House is Haunted*, began with traditional gestures like throwing crockery and tossing young people out of bed. Once it got into its stride, however, it was liable to make such demands as "Fuck off and get me some jazz music"; it wrote a message, announcing that it was Fred, in sticky tape on the bathroom door; and it even lured human faces (presumably not its own), thoughtfully pre-wrapped in the appropriate paper, through walls. Spoons were bent (Uri Geller was still in vogue) and quantities of spirits, some long since dead, manifested themselves, including the chief psychic investigator's daughter, who had been killed in a motor accident the previous year. Several mediums described objects and people to be seen in the house and one suggested that the daughters were reincarnated witches. At one stage, one of the daughters admitted responsibility, but the investigators were now so profoundly convinced of the authenticity of the phenomena, that all their hostility and suspicion was directed towards scepticism. The account of how they arrived at this conviction is fascinating, both for its unsparing relation of absurdities and for its dogged determination that some otherworldly significance must lurk beneath so many apparently ludicrous, sordid and pointless incidents.

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